

Jewish Bolshevism

This article is about an antisemitic canard. For the participation of the Jews in the Russian revolutionary movement, see [Bundism](#).

Jewish Bolshevism, also known as **Judeo-Bolshevism**, is an antisemitic canard which alleges that the Jews were at the origin of the Russian Revolution and held the primary power among Bolsheviks. Similarly, the **Jewish Communism** theory implies that Jews have been dominating the Communist movements in the world. It is similar to the [ZOG conspiracy theory](#), which asserts that Jews control world politics.^[1] The expressions have been used as a catchword for the assertion that Communism is a Jewish conspiracy, and it has often coincided with overtly aggressive nationalistic tendencies in the 20th century and 21st century. In Poland, "Judeo-Bolshevism" was known as "Żydokomuna" and was used as an antisemitic stereotype.^[2]

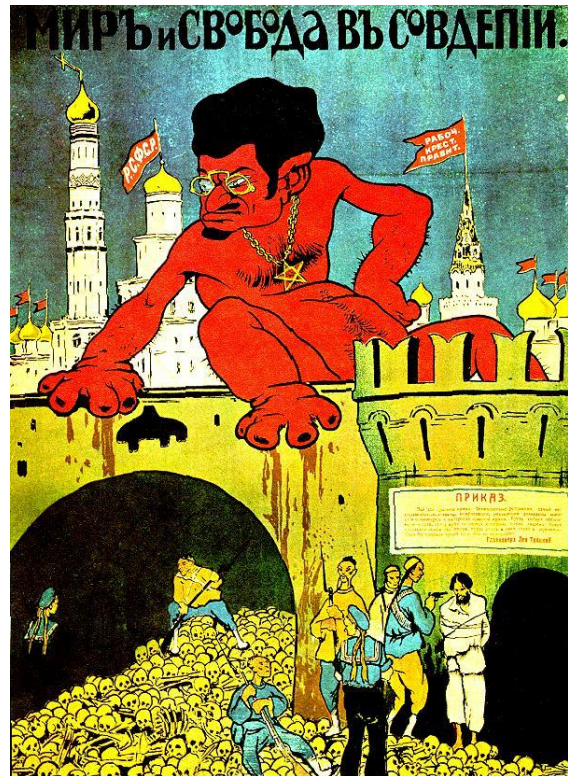
The expression was the title of a pamphlet, *The Jewish Bolshevism*, and became current after the 1917 October Revolution in Russia, featuring prominently in the propaganda of the anti-communist "White" forces during the Russian Civil War.

The theory was propagated by the [Nazi Party](#) and their American sympathizers.^{[3][4][5][6]} In Poland before World War II, the label *Żydokomuna* was used in the same way to allege that the Jews were conspiring with the USSR to capture Poland.

1 Origins

The conflation of Jews and revolution emerged in the atmosphere of destruction of Russia during World War I. When the revolutions of 1917 crippled Russia's war effort, conspiracy theories grew up - even far from Berlin and Petrograd, many Britons for example, ascribed the Russian Revolution to an "apparent conjunction of Bolsheviks, Germans and Jews."^[8]

The worldwide spread of the concept in the 1920s is associated with the publication and circulation of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a fraudulent document that purported to describe a secret Jewish conspiracy aimed at world domination. The expression made an issue out of the Jewishness of some leading Bolsheviks (most notably [Leon Trotsky](#)) during and after the October Revolution. [Daniel Pipes](#) says that "primarily through the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the Whites spread these charges to



White movement propaganda poster from the Russian Civil War era (1919), a caricature of Leon Trotsky, who was viewed as a symbol of Jewish Bolshevism.^[7]

an international audience."^[9] [James Webb](#) wrote that it is rare to find an antisemitic source after 1917 that "...does not stand in debt to the White Russian analysis of the Revolution."^[10]

2 Jewish involvement in Russian Communism

2.1 Persecution of Jews in the late Russian Empire

Main article: [History of the Jews in Russia and the Soviet Union](#)

Antisemitism in the Russian Empire was both on cultural level and institutionalized. The Jews were restricted to live within the [Pale of Settlement](#),^[11] as well as subjected to sporadic pogroms.^[12] In the period from 1881 to 1920,

more than two million Jews left Russia.^[13]

According to Berel Wein:

Expulsions, deportations, arrests, and beatings became the daily lot of the Jews, not only of their lower class, but even of the middle class and the Jewish intelligentsia. The government of Alexander III waged a campaign of war against its Jewish [citizens]... The Jews were driven and hounded, and emigration appeared to be the only escape from the terrible tyranny of the Romanovs.”^[14]

Jews in relatively large numbers joined various ideological currents favoring gradual or revolutionary changes within the Russian Empire. Those movements ranged from the far left (anarchists,^[15] Bundists, Bolsheviks, Mensheviks^[16]) to moderate left (Trudoviks^[17]) and constitutionalist (Constitutional Democrats^[18]) parties. Monarchist parties, such as Union of the Russian People, expressed clearly antisemitic attitudes, and included antisemitic paragraphs in their political program.

2.2 Jews in the Bolshevik party

On the eve of the February Revolution, in 1917, the Bolshevik party had about 23,000 members, of whom 364 were known to be ethnic Jews.^[13] According to the 1922 party census, there were 19,564 Jewish Bolsheviks, comprising 5.21% of the total.^[19] Between 1917 and 1919, Jewish Bolshevik party leaders included Grigory Zinoviev, Moisei Uritsky, Lev Kamenev, Yakov Sverdlov, Grigory Sokolnikov, and Leon Trotsky. Kamenev was of mixed ethnic Russian and Jewish parentage.^{[19][20]} Trotsky was also a member (or "Narkom") of the ruling Council of People's Commissars. Among the 23 Narkoms between 1923 and 1930, five were Jewish.^[19]

Among members of the Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets in 1929, there were 402 ethnic Russians, 95 Ukrainians, 55 Jews, 26 Latvians, 13 Poles, and 12 Germans – Jewish representation had declined from 60 members in 1927.^[21] With regards to Jewish representation in the ruling Politburo, it waned rapidly starting in 1918. It began with the assassination of Uritsky in August 1918. Then Sverdlov died of disease in March 1919 and Sokolnikov was shunted aside. Three years later in 1922, Jewish members in the Central Committee, the Politburo's new name, had shrunk to a minority of three: Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev. Eventually they were physically eliminated by Joseph Stalin: Zinoviev and Kamenev in 1936 and Trotsky in 1940.

In the 1920s, of the 417 members of the Central Executive Committee, the party Central Committee, the Presidium of the Executive of the Soviets of the USSR and the Russian Republic, the People's Commissars, 6% were ethnic Jews.^[19]

Chart from: "Conditions in Russia," by William H. King, Senator [see bottom]
Chart excerpted & transcribed by RLB on September 18 & 20, 2007, from: http://www.geocities.com/ravendi/conditions_in_Russia.html

Nationality	Total membership	Percentage of total	Number per thousand population
Great Russians (Russians)	270,409	72.00	3.80
Little Russians (Ukrainians)	22,078	5.88	.94
White Russians	5,583	1.47	1.67
Liatvians (Lets)	9,512	2.53	78.00
Georgians	7,378	1.90	4.52
Jews	19,564	5.20	7.20
Turko-Tatars	6,534	1.72	1.19
Armenians	3,828	1.02	2.91
Poles	5,649	1.50	10.80
Lithuanians	1,472	.39	32.80
Germans	2,217	.59	1.93
Osetins (Northern Caucasus)	1,699	1.47	8.00
Kirghiz (Southern Ural Steppes)	4,946	1.32	.89
Uzbeks (Southern Ural Steppes)	2,043	.54	.76
Turkomen	1,000	.27	1.00
Estonians	1,964	.53	16.30
Mordva Upper Volga)	1,632	.43	1.47
Chuvash (Upper Volga)	1,054	.28	1.31
Finns	938	.25	7.96
Persians	709	.19	1.42
Hungarians	533	1.14	2.97

from:
68TH CONGRESS, 1st Session, SENATE, DOCUMENT No. 126, CONDITIONS IN RUSSIA;
SPEECH OF HON. WILLIAM H. KING, A SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF UTAH,
DELIVERED IN THE SENATE, JANUARY 22 AND APRIL 24, 1924,
PRESENTED BY MR. LODGE, MAY 26, 1924.
--Ordered to be printed, WASHINGTON, GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, 1924

Conditions in Russia (1924) A Census - Bolsheviks by Ethnicity

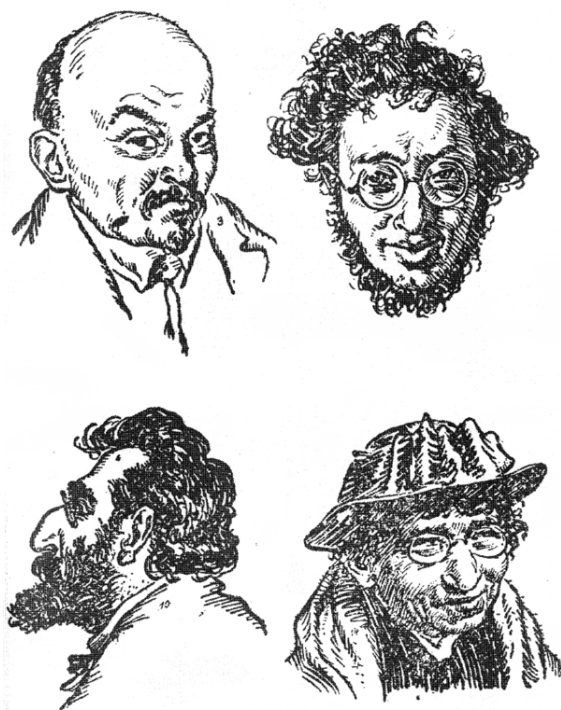
Between 1936 and 1940, during the Great Purge, Yezhovshchina and after the rapprochement with Nazi Germany, Stalin had largely eliminated Jews from senior party, government, diplomatic, security and military positions.^[22] A prominent victim of the Purge was the Head of the State Security or NKVD (the enforcement arm of government previously known as the Cheka and GPU) who also happened to have come from a Jewish background: Genrikh Yagoda. In 1939, Stalin directed incoming Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov to "purge the ministry of Jews".^[23] Although some scholars believe that this decision was taken for primarily domestic reasons,^[23] others argue it may have been a signal to Nazi Germany that the USSR was ready for non-aggression talks.^{[24][25]}

Bolsheviks, including those of Jewish origin, were generally hostile to Judaism, as they were to other religions. After the Russian Revolution, the teaching of Hebrew and religious instruction in Judaism were banned.^[26] According to historian Iakov Etinger, many Soviet state purges of the 1930s were antisemitic in nature, and a more intense antisemitic policy developed toward the end of World War II.^[27] Stalin in 1952 allegedly said privately that "every Jew is a potential spy for the United States".^[28]

An example of the exaggeration of Jewish influence in the

Soviet Communist Party is the estimate by Alfred Jensen that in the 1920s “75 per cent of the leading Bolsheviks” were “of Jewish origin” quoted by journalist David Aaronovitch. According to Aaronovitch, “a cursory examination of membership of the top committees shows this figure to be an absurd exaggeration”.^[29]

3 Nazi Germany



Vladimir Lenin, Karl Radek, Julius Martov, and Emma Goldman. Caricatures of Bolshevik leaders from Alfred Rosenberg's The Jewish Bolshevism

Walter Laqueur traces the Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy theory to Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, for whom Bolshevism was “the revolt of the Jewish, Slavic and Mongolian races against the German (Aryan) element in Russia”. Germans, according to Rosenberg, had been responsible for Russia’s historic achievements and had been sidelined by the Bolsheviks, who did not represent the interests of the Russian people, but instead those of its ethnic Jewish and Chinese population.^[30]

Michael Kellogg in his Ph.D. thesis argues that the racist ideology of Nazis was to a significant extent influenced by White emigres in Germany, many of whom while being former subjects of the Russian Empire, were of non-Russian descent: ethnic Germans, residents of Baltic lands, including Baltic Germans, and Ukrainians. Of particular role was their *Aufbau* organization (Aufbau: Wirtschafts-politische Vereinigung für den Osten (Reconstruction: Economic-Political Organization for the East). For example, its leader was instrumental in making the *Protocols of The Elders of Zion* available in Ger-



Anti-Soviet Nazi propaganda poster in the Polish language, the text reads “Death! to Jewish-Bolshevik pestilence of murdering!”

man language. He argues that early Hitler was rather philosemitic, and became rabidly anti-Semitic since 1919 under the influence of the White emigre convictions about the conspiracy of the Jews, an unseen unity from financial capitalists to Bolsheviks, to conquer the world.^[31] Therefore, his conclusion is that White emigres were at the source of the Nazi concept of Jewish Bolshevism. Annemarie Sammartino argues that this view is contestable. While there is no doubt that White emigres were instrumental in reinforcing the idea of 'Jewish Bolshevism' among Nazis, the concept is also found in many German early post-World-War-I documents. Also, Germany had its own share of Jewish Communists “to provide fodder for the paranoid fantasies of German anti-semites” without Russian Bolsheviks.^[32]

During the 1920s, Hitler declared that the mission of the Nazi movement was to destroy “Jewish Bolshevism”.^[33] Hitler asserted that the “three vices” of “Jewish Marxism” were democracy, pacifism and internationalism,^[34] and that the Jews were behind Bolshevism, communism and Marxism.^[35]

In Nazi Germany, this concept of Jewish Bolshevism reflected a common perception that Communism was a Jewish-inspired and Jewish-led movement seeking world domination from its origin. The term was popularized in print in German journalist Dietrich Eckhart's 1924 pamphlet “Der Bolschewismus von Moses bis Lenin” (“Bolshevism from Moses to Lenin”) which depicted Moses and Lenin as both being Communists and Jews. This

was followed by Alfred Rosenberg's 1923 edition of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in 1925, which saw Bolshevism as "Jewry's twentieth century effort to take world dominion unto itself."

According to French spymaster and writer Henri Rollin, "Hitlerism" was based on "anti-Soviet counter-revolution" promoting the "myth of a mysterious Jewish-Masonic-Bolshevik plot", entailing that the First World War had been instigated by a vast Jewish-Masonic conspiracy to topple the Russian, German, and Austro-Hungarian Empires and implement Bolshevism by fomenting liberal ideas.^[36]

A major source for propaganda about Jewish Bolshevism in the 1930s and early 1940s was the pro-Nazi and anti-semitic international *Welt-Dienst* news agency founded in 1933 by Ulrich Fleischhauer.

Within the German Army, a tendency to see Soviet Communism as a Jewish conspiracy had grown since the First World War, something that became officialised under the Nazis. A 1932 pamphlet by Ewald Banse of the Government-financed German National Association for the Military Sciences described the Soviet leadership as mostly Jewish, dominating an apathetic and mindless Russian population.^[37]

Propaganda produced in 1935 by the psychological war laboratory of the German War Ministry described Soviet officials as "mostly filthy Jews" and called on Red Army soldiers to rise up and kill their "Jewish commissars". This material was not used at the time, but served as a basis for propaganda in the 1940s.^[38]

Members of the SS were encouraged to fight against the "Jewish Bolshevik sub-humans". In the pamphlet *The SS as an Anti-Bolshevist Fighting Organization*, published in 1936, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler wrote:

We shall take care that never again in Germany, the heart of Europe, will the Jewish-Bolshevistic revolution of subhumans be able to be kindled either from within or through emissaries from without.^[39]

In his speech to the *Reichstag* justifying Operation Barbarossa in 1941, Hitler said:

For more than two decades the Jewish Bolshevik regime in Moscow had tried to set fire not merely to Germany but to all of Europe...The Jewish Bolshevik rulers in Moscow have unswervingly undertaken to force their domination upon us and the other European nations and that is not merely spiritually, but also in terms of military power...Now the time has come to confront the plot of the Anglo-Saxon Jewish war-mongers and the equally Jewish rulers of the Bolshevik centre in Moscow!^[40]

Field-Marshal Wilhelm Keitel gave an order on 12 September 1941 which declared: "the struggle against Bolshevism demands ruthless and energetic, rigorous action above all against the Jews, the main carriers of Bolshevism."^[41]

Historian Richard J. Evans wrote that Wehrmacht officers regarded the Russians as "sub-human", and were from the time of the invasion of Poland in 1939 telling their troops the war was caused by "Jewish vermin", explaining to the troops that the war against the Soviet Union was a war to wipe out what were variously described as "Jewish Bolshevik subhumans", the "Mongol hordes", the "Asiatic flood" and the "red beast", language clearly intended to produce war crimes by reducing the enemy to something less than human.^[42]

Joseph Goebbels published an article in 1942 called "the so-called Russian soul" in which he claimed that Bolshevism was exploiting the Slavs and that the battle of the Soviet Union determined whether Europe would become under complete control by international Jewry.^[43]

Nazi propaganda presented Barbarossa as an ideological-racial war between German National Socialism and "Judeo-Bolshevism", dehumanising the Soviet enemy as a force of Slavic *Untermensch* (sub-humans) and "Asiatic" savages engaging in "barbaric Asiatic fighting methods" commanded by evil Jewish commissars whom German troops were to grant no mercy.^[44] The vast majority of the Wehrmacht officers and soldiers tended to regard the war in Nazi terms, seeing their Soviet opponents as sub-human.^[45]

While National Socialism brought about a new version and formulation of European culture, Bolshevism is the declaration of war by Jewish-led international subhumans against culture itself. It is not only anti-bourgeois, it is anti-cultural. It means, in the final consequence, the absolute destruction of all economic, social, state, cultural, and civilizing advances made by western civilization for the benefit of a rootless and nomadic international clique of conspirators, who have found their representation in Jewry.

— Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg, September 1935^[46]

4 Outside Nazi Germany

4.1 Great Britain, 1920s

In the early 1920s, a leading British antisemite, Henry Hamilton Beamish, stated that Bolshevism was the same thing as Judaism.^[47] In the same decade, future wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill penned an editorial

entitled “Zionism versus Bolshevism,” which was published in the *Illustrated Sunday Herald*. In the article, which asserted that Zionism and Bolshevism were engaged in a “struggle for the soul of the Jewish people”, he called on Jews to repudiate “the Bolshevik conspiracy” and make clear that “the Bolshevik movement is not a Jewish movement” but stated that:

[Bolshevism] among the Jews is nothing new. From the days of Spartacus-Weishaupt to those of Karl Marx, and down to Trotsky (Russia), Bela Kun (Hungary), Rosa Luxemburg (Germany), and Emma Goldman (United States), this world-wide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilisation and for the reconstitution of society on the basis of arrested development, of envious malevolence, and impossible equality, has been steadily growing.^[48]

Author Gisela C. Lebzelter noted that Churchill’s analysis failed to analyze the role that Russian oppression of Jews had played in their joining various revolutionary movements, but instead “to inherent inclinations rooted in Jewish character and religion.”^[49]

5 Works propagating the Jewish Bolshevism canard

5.1 The Jewish Bolshevism

The Jewish Bolshevism is a 31- or 32-page antisemitic pamphlet published in London in 1922 and 1923 by the Britons Publishing Society. It included a foreword by the German Nazi leader Alfred Rosenberg who promulgated the concept of “Jewish Bolshevism”.

This relatively obscure publication embodies the Nazi doctrine that “Jewishness” and Bolshevism are the same; or that Bolshevism is Jewish, whether everything Jewish is included within Bolshevism. The methodology used consists of identifying Bolsheviks as Jews; by birth, or by name or by demographics.

According to Singerman, *The Jewish Bolshevism*, which he dubs as item “0121” in his Bibliography, is “Identical in content to item “0120”, the pamphlet *The Grave Diggers of Russia*, which was published in 1921 in Germany, by Dr. E. Boepple. In 1922, historian Gisela C. Lebzelter wrote: “The Britons published a brochure entitled Jewish Bolshevism, which featured drawings of Russian leaders supplemented by brief comments on their Jewish descent and affiliation. This booklet, which was prefaced by Alfred Rosenberg, had previously been published in English by völkisch Deutscher Volksverlag.”^[50]

5.2 The Octopus

The Octopus is a 256-page book self-published in 1940 by Elizabeth Dilling under the pseudonym “Rev. Frank Woodruff Johnson”.^[51]

5.3 Behind Communism

Frank L. Britton, editor of *The American Nationalist* published a book, *Behind Communism*, in 1952 which disseminated the myth that Communism was a Jewish conspiracy originating in Palestine.^[52]

6 Dismissal of the concept

Researchers in the topic, such as Polish philosopher Stanisław Krajewski ^[53] or André Gerrits, ^[54] denounce the concept of “Jewish Bolshevism” as a prejudice. Law professor Ilya Somin agrees, and compares Jewish involvement in other communist countries. “Overrepresentation of a group in a political movement does not prove either that the movement was “dominated” by that group or that it primarily serves that group’s interests. The idea that communist oppression was somehow Jewish in nature is belied by the record of communist regimes in countries like China, North Korea, and Cambodia, where the Jewish presence was and is minuscule.”^[55]

7 See also

- Cultural Bolshevism
- Cultural Marxism

8 Notes

- [1] Alderman 1983.
- [2] Krzysztof Szwaagrzyk, “Żydzi w kierownictwie UB. Stereotyp czy rzeczywistość?”, *Biuletyn IPN* (11/2005), pp. 37-42
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- [5] Glen Jeansonne (9 June 1997). *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and World War II*. University of Chicago Press. p. 8. ISBN 978-0-226-39589-0.
- [6] Laqueur, Walter Ze'ev (1965-01-01). *Russia and Germany*. Transaction Publishers. p. 105. ISBN 9781412833547.
- [7] Serhii Plokhyy (1 December 2015). *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*. Basic Books. p. 223. ISBN 978-0-465-07394-8.
- [8] Fromkin (2009) pp. 247-248.
- [9] Pipes 1997, p. 93.
- [10] Webb 1976, p. 295.
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- [16] Levin 1988, p. 13.
- [17] Ascher 1992, p. 148.
- [18] Witte 24 March 1907.
- [19] Herf 2008, p. 96.
- [20] Hoffman & Mendelsohn 2008, p. 178.
- [21] Pinkus 1990, p. 81.
- [22] Levin 1988, pp. 318-325.
- [23] Resis 2000, p. 35.
- [24] Herf 2008, p. 56.
- [25] Moss 2005, p. 283.
- [26] Wrongfully Accused: Jews and Bolshevism December 9, 2007
- [27] Ro'i 1995, pp. 103-106.
- [28] Figs 2008, p. 251.
- [29] Aaronovitch, David. "Our Jewish Communist past". *September 23, 2011*. RSS Twitter Facebook Archives Subscribe S & P About THE JEWISH CHRONICLE ONLINE. Retrieved 18 September 2013.
- [30] Laqueur 1990, pp. 33-34.
- [31] Michael Kellogg, *The Russian Roots of Nazism - White Émigrés and the Making of National Socialism, 1917-1945*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. xiv + 327 pp., ISBN 978-0-521-84512-0 (Introduction)
- [32] "A review by Annemarie Sammartino " of Michael Kellogg's *The Russian Roots of Nazism*
- [33] Kershaw 1999, p. 257.
- [34] 1999, p. 303.
- [35] 1999, p. 259.
- [36] Kellogg 2008.
- [37] Förster 2005, p. 119.
- [38] Förster 2005, pp. 122-127.
- [39] Himmler 1936, p. 8.
- [40] Hillgruber 1987.
- [41] Kershaw 2000, p. 465.
- [42] Evans 1989, pp. 59-60.
- [43] "Goebbels on the Soviet Union (July, 1942)". *calvin.edu*.
- [44] Förster 2005, p. 126.
- [45] Förster 2005, p. 127.
- [46] "GOEBBELS CLAIMS JEWS WILL DESTROY CULTURE". United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. September 1935.
- [47] Webb 1976, p. 130.
- [48] Churchill 8 February 1920.
- [49] Lebzelter 1978, p. 181.
- [50] Political Anti-Semitism in England, 1918-1939, p. 64
- [51] Glen Jeansonne (9 June 1997). *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and World War II*. University of Chicago Press. p. 25. ISBN 978-0-226-39589-0.
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10 Further reading

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